

HISTORY'S WHO'S WHO --- The Unknown First Director May 23

Rear Admiral Earl Stone, USN, was first director of the Armed Forces Security Agency (AFSA), the National Security Agency's immediate predecessor organization. Stone directed AFSA from July 15, 1949, to July 15, 1951. As the first AFSA director, Stone presided over the initial and stormy U.S. government attempts to centralize this country's post-World War II cryptologic efforts. In these early years of sparring with the various military cryptologic organizations, Stone's consolidation efforts met with only limited success. He laid the groundwork, however, for successful centralization in the early years of NSA's existence.

Stone first became involved in cryptology in August 1948 when he was appointed by Defense Secretary James Forrestal to serve on a military committee to consider the "creation of a Unified Armed Forces Security Agency." At its first meeting, the committee selected Stone, then director of Naval Communications, as chairman, leading to its common designation as the Stone Board. While the committee focused on communications intelligence and communications security from a military point of view, its Terms of Reference also instructed it to consult with the State Department and the CIA.

The Stone Board deliberations revealed that the Navy and the Air Force were not ready to accept the kind of central unification proposed by the Army. After considerable debate, Stone could not influence his own Navy or the newly-created Air Force to support the administration's position favoring consolidation. The Stone Board's report to Forrestal in December 1948 was actually a majority report (Navy and Air Force--against cryptologic unification) and an accompanying minority report (Army--for unification).

Louis Johnson, who became secretary of defense in March 1949 after Forrestal's death, quickly moved to resolve the service differences, and chartered AFSA on May 20, 1949. He directed a merger of the service COMINT processing activities and placed the new AFSA structure under the control of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS). Johnson hoped to achieve a degree of unification of the services, efficiency in the management of cryptology, and minimization of the resource and duplication of effort problems associated with three separate service agencies.



Admiral Stone and some AFSA officials at Arlington Hall Station greet a UK visitor, Brigadier John Tiltman from GCHQ. To Admiral Stone's left are Solomon Kullback, a senior cryptanalyst, and Paul Neff, a senior in communications security.

On June 15, 1949, the JCS selected Stone as the first director of AFSA. He also wore a second hat as coordinator of Joint Operations (CJO)/executive agent for the United States COMINT Intelligence Board (USCIB). Three deputy directors assisted Stone, among them Navy captain Joseph Wenger, who later became NSA's first vice-director (December 1952-November 1953).

Stone's appointment had many anomalies. First, Stone had no experience in COMINT (although he did have a good background in Navy communications). Further, Stone represented the service most consistent in its desire for cryptologic autonomy, and he had actually signed the majority Stone Board report opposing the creation of the agency he was now to head.

AFSA is not considered a successful organization, although this was not Admiral Stone's fault. After the decision to establish AFSA had been made, he did his best to make it work. However, the director of AFSA did not have enough authority over issues such as central processing, budgeting, assignment of military personnel, and intercept task assignments. As a result, Stone spent most of his time negotiating with the services over what AFSA could do. The full extent and impact of the operational weaknesses of AFSA did not become widely recognized until the beginning of the Korean War in June 1950.

Stone was born on December 2, 1895, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and began his service in the Navy in 1914 as a midshipman at the United States Naval Academy. He was commissioned an ensign on June 29, 1917, and then progressively advanced in rank to rear admiral, to which he was promoted on January 8, 1946. He retired from active duty on 1 January 1958, and died on September 24, 1989.

Stone first served aboard the cruiser USS *Cleveland* during World War I. His extensive career in naval communications began with his next set of orders; from March 1919 until June 1923, he gained experience as aide and radio officer on the staff of Commander Base Force, Pacific Fleet. By June 1925, he had attended the Navy Postgraduate School, completed a Master of Science degree in communications engineering at Harvard University, and spent four months at the Naval Research Laboratory for additional instruction. Continuing his career emphasis on communications from 1928 to 1930 and again from 1933 to 1935, Stone served in the Navy Department's Office of Naval Communications in Washington, D.C. In June 1938, he returned to Washington for a three-year tour in the Navy Department as communications war plans officer. From 1952 to 1953, he was assigned to the Headquarters, European Command, as director of communications.

In addition to numerous assignments in naval communications, from 1935 until 1938 Stone held command of two destroyers, the USS *Long* (1935-37) and USS *Aylwin* (1937-38). In February 1941, he joined the battleship USS *California* as executive officer. Additionally, he commanded the USS *Wisconsin* (1944-45) and cruiser Division One (1951-52). From 1953 to 1955, Stone served as commander, Training Command, U.S. Pacific Fleet. His last tour of active service, 1955 to 1958, was as superintendent of the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California.

Stone was one of two senior leaders in the central cryptologic organization who was present during the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

502 caption: 18 people standing in a line in an unidentified building, two of them women; a caption embedded in the photo puts the date as March 1950.